

put in my place. It turned me into such a social pariah that my husband suffered a loss of work as a result. I am sorry.

I'm glad to hear that people who attend the fair don't engage in inappropriate sexual activity. It warms my heart, as someone who has close friends in recovery, that people at the fair don't smoke pot, drop acid, or roll on ecstasy. I am aware that it's an alcohol-free festival, and I think that's awesome, considering alcohol is one of the most destructive drugs in which one can indulge. People I know always bragged about keggers at their campsites, but since I've been told that doesn't happen, at least not any more. I think that's great.

Finally, as one who tries to minimize her own carbon footprint, I'm stoked that it's a zero waste event. Friends who volunteer there have told me it takes about two to four weeks to clean up the mess; I'm glad they're just grandiose liars. I guess it really is just about people hanging out wearing dumb outfits and listening to music I can't stand. That's fine. I probably wear lame clothes and listen to irritating music as well.

It's really sad that the time I went to the fair all I saw were people being lewd and wasted on drugs. I'm really happy that the event is no longer perverted by those types. I don't know who runs it, but I'd like to thank that person for kicking out all the stoners, druggies, and pervs! Maybe I'll make it over this year after all.

*Eve Cienfuegos
Eugene*

TAX CREDIT DENIED

This spring a Kulongoski appointee at the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) denied us more than \$1,500 in Oregon Business Energy tax credits for the installation of super efficient ductless heat pumps at a rental house. We decided to install heat pumps because it was the right thing to do for our renters and the planet.

In December 2009 Harry Esteve with *The Oregonian* published an expose about how ODOE had given tens of millions of dollars of business energy tax credits to companies like Walmart and Weyerhaeuser.

In the case of Weyerhaeuser \$3.3 million was given for a biomass incinerator in Albany which was shutdown and provides no electricity.

I wrote my state representatives about my concerns that we might not receive a tax credit after hearing of this scandal because we hadn't received a confirmation of the energy tax credit we applied for almost 10 months earlier. My reward for voicing such concerns was vindictive punishment denying us our tax credit by an ODOE bureaucrat while simultaneously letting corporations and their CEO crooks get away with swindling millions of dollars of Oregon taxpayer funds. Thanks ODOE and Gov. Kulongoski.

*Shannon Wilson
Eugene*

DEFYING REASON

The incendiary policy pronouncements made by House Republican Leader John Boehner in an interview with the *Pittsburg Tribune-Review* could make some of us believe that Boehner is a Democratic Party plant designed to torpedo the Republicans' chances in the November elections.

For those of you still lucky enough to be working, you might need to work longer to qualify for Social Security benefits under Boehner's plan to raise the retirement age to 70. In addition, Boehner stated in the interview that if you have "substantial" income in addition to Social Security, he does not see why you should receive the Social Security benefits. So, if you were careful enough to save some money for retirement, Boehner wants to

penalize you for daring to take a "double-dip," even if it's your own money.

For those of us damaged by the Great Recession, Boehner thinks that reforming the conditions that lead to this disaster for millions of American family is "killing an ant with a nuclear weapon." As President Obama stated, Boehner is "out of touch with the struggles facing the American people." The Republican policy is that the unemployed are best served by terminating their employment benefits and casting them into the non-existent job market.

Boehner's statements defy reason. Leader Boehner's beliefs are proof that the Republicans have learned nothing from their past brush with economic disaster. Why would anyone vote for them?

*Gerry Merritt
Eugene*

END CORRUPTION?

The U.S. government told the Afghan president to end corruption. I'll bet that President Karzai laughed so hard he sprayed goat's milk out his nose. I know I did.

*Spencer Hicks
Eugene*

STOP THE INVASION

I think most of us who want illegal immigration stopped (and that is most Americans) can agree with Jennifer Corona's well-written letter ("A Better Life," 6/17).

If I were faced with Mexico's corrupt government, economic devastation caused by NAFTA and out-of-control drug gangs, I'd want a better life too.

But this is no longer the last century in the U.S. We no longer have the surplus resources to continue to absorb the world's disenfranchised millions. California—ground zero for illegal immigration—is technically bankrupt. It is now the least educated state. Its current economic disparity is worse than Mississippi's in the '70s. Other Western

states are headed down the same road.

In Oregon there are major drug arrests of Mexican nationals nearly every week, but you don't read about these in our two local papers. Arizona's government felt compelled to take action because the feds never will. Poll after poll shows widespread support—even in California—for Arizona's SB 1070.

I commend Corona and her family for taking the right and legal approach to U.S. citizenship. But the American public is not likely to put up much longer with the invasion across our southern border—or with politicians who are supporting it.

*Jerry Ritter
Springfield*

INDISPUTABLE

Let's talk facts:

1. Nothing Barack Obama has done since taking office has improved the American economy, quality of life, environment, or relations with foreign nations (allies or enemies alike). Fact.

2. Obama has never said one positive thing about the U.S. as a senator, candidate for president, or president of the U.S. Fact.

3. Obama has done nothing to expedite efforts to assist the mitigation of the current environmental crisis in the Gulf of Mexico. If anything, his administration has magnified the tragedy by its collective bureaucratic stasis. Fact.

4. Obama, despite bringing this country to the brink of bankruptcy with outlandish government spending, hasn't created one iota of true economic growth, economic hope, or any kind of stable employment. Fact.

5. Obama is not qualified to be president of the U.S. Fact.

6. The richest members of Congress and the political class in general are Democrats. Fact.

7. Don't get me wrong, Republicans at the national level are whores, too. Fact.

8. Obama is George Soros' mouthpiece. Fact?

*Scott Zeppa
Springfield*

viewpoint BY JOSHUA WELCH

Meatless Mondays

Time to take a bite out of climate change

Imagine that Al Gore traveled to Eugene to deliver one of his well-known climate change presentations. And while here, he decides to visit one of our local eateries and orders a thick juicy steak. (One thing he's *not* known for is healthy eating.) After having some delicious strawberry cheesecake for desert, Al drives back to his hotel in a gas-guzzling Hummer! The local media would rightly crucify him for his blatant hypocritical and irresponsible transportation choice, but would probably not think twice about his culinary choices. Not for long.

A report released this month from United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) international panel of sustainable resource management, unequivocally states that in order to avoid the worst impacts of climate change a global shift towards a vegan diet is absolutely necessary. The report says: "Impacts from agriculture are expected to increase substantially due to population growth increasing consumption of animal products. Unlike fossil fuels, it is difficult to look for alternatives: People have to eat. A substantial reduction of impacts would only be possible with a substantial worldwide diet change, away from animal products." That's right, if you want to call yourself an environmentalist, you better not be eating meat, eggs, and dairy—or at least not very much.

This report confirms what many have known for some time. There are mountains of evidence demonstrating that animal agriculture has been decimating the environment at every level. This ugly industry is a primary driver of deforestation and the top polluter of waterways. A study from Carnegie Mellon University showed that switching to a plant-based diet just once a week would

do more for the environment than eating an entirely local diet every single day.

Upward of 99% of animal agriculture in the U.S. is made up of what many call "factory farms." This is where hundreds of millions of living, thinking, feeling animals live short, miserable lives cramped in small spaces, crates, and cages, rarely seeing the light of day. The people who own and operate these deplorable and unnecessary businesses work very hard to hide from the public the intense suffering these sentient beings must endure.

While certain forms of animal agriculture such as small-scale organic free-range farming and backyard chickens are more sustainable and less cruel than modern animal agriculture, the reality is that if we want to protect and preserve this planet, we *must* consume much less meat, eggs and dairy.

Last year Baltimore City Schools launched the program "Meatless Mondays," a program created by the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future. While they haven't gotten off the cheese, Baltimore students aren't eating meat at school on Mondays. Baltimore officials claimed they launched the program to address childhood obesity, but it will obviously also help address the climate crisis. What do you say, 4J?

We could and should do much more than just Meatless Mondays in our schools. Our state and local governments should work hard to create programs and incentives for Oregonians to support sustainable plant-based agriculture. We need bold leadership and we need it now.

Lastly, a significant reduction of animal product consumption would not just improve planetary health, but would also drastically improve our overall personal health. Shifting to a plant-based or mostly plant-based diet would reduce rates of cancer, Type II diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity and heart disease, which would in turn significantly reduce our health care costs.

Bon appetit!

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